

EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement

Fourth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries

Wednesday 20 July 2022 | 08:45 – 12:45 BST / 09:45 – 13:45 CEST

Brussels & Virtual (EU host)

Minutes of the meeting

Item 1: Opening of the Specialised Committee and adoption of the agenda

The EU, as host, welcomed both Delegations to the fourth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF). The Parties exchanged opening remarks where they acknowledged the SCF as the forum under which the work of both Parties under the TCA in the area of fisheries takes place. The Parties adopted the provisional agenda with one adjustment, noting that item 7(f) on the provisional agenda incorrectly read as “Celtic Sea Mixed fisheries science” and should read “Mixed fisheries science”.

Item 2: Celtic Sea technical measures

The Parties agreed to proceed with the next steps at technical level as set out in the updated data collation exercise paper. The Parties shared the view that the evaluation framework set out in the updated paper is an appropriate basis on which to conduct work at technical level on *ex-ante* evaluations of technical measures foreseen in paragraph 12(c) of the Written Record of fisheries consultations between the United Kingdom and the European Union for 2021.

Item 3: Deep sea stocks

a) Roundnose grenadier

The Parties agreed on the importance of progressing draft terms of reference to ICES and will endeavour to have the request drafted by the September Working Group meeting.

b) Western red seabream

The Parties noted the importance of supporting the long-term recovery of this stock. The EU informed of a draft Delegated Act under development, which will shortly be notified to the UK in accordance with Article 496(3) of the TCA. The Parties agreed to return to discussion on management of this stock at the next meeting of the SCF.

Item 4: Protocol for notifications under Article 496(3) of the TCA

The Parties noted the outcomes of discussions on key elements of notifications to date. The EU and UK agreed on the importance of progressing this work and agreed that they should continue discussions towards the SCF meeting in October, including commencing drafting of a joint document.

Item 5: Fisheries management update

The EU provided an update on its draft Delegated Act on North Sea Natura 2000 sites, which will shortly be notified to the UK in accordance with Article 496(3) of the TCA. The UK provided an update of the objectives of its public consultation on designating Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) that runs from 6 July to 28 September 2022. The Parties also noted the recent discussion in the Working Group on Fisheries meeting of 28 and 29 June on the UK's call for evidence concerning fisheries management measures in 13 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The Parties agreed to continued engagement on MPAs in due course. The Parties noted that these exchanges were without prejudice to Article 496(3) of the TCA.

Item 6: Guidelines for setting TACs for special stocks

Both Parties reaffirmed the importance of making progress on guidelines for provisional TACs for special stocks, in view of the past deadline in the TCA. The Parties noted the constructive discussions to date on category (a) stocks (zero TAC advice stocks) and committed to continue these discussions with a view to reaching at least partial agreement for this category still this year as a priority if possible. The Parties noted that an exchange of views on special stocks and the application of any guidelines is foreseen as part of the planning meeting between the Parties in September in the schedule for the consultations agreed in January 2022.

Item 7: ICES requests (terms of reference)

a) Discard survivability

The Parties agreed on the tabled draft terms of reference. The EU will draft a joint letter to ICES and will share it for the UK to review.

b) Seabass allocation tool

The Parties agreed on the tabled draft terms of reference. The EU will draft a joint letter to ICES and will share it for the UK to review.

c) Celtic Sea whiting

The Parties agreed on the tabled draft terms of reference. The EU will draft a joint letter to ICES and will share it for the UK to review.

Taking note of the concerning scientific advice, the Parties agreed on the need to reflect carefully in the 2023 Annual Consultations on the appropriate setting of the TAC.

d) Celtic Sea Stocks with no advice

The Parties agreed on the tabled draft terms of reference concerning Celtic Sea saithe and Western Channel and Bristol Channel herring. The UK will draft a joint letter to ICES and will share it for the EU to review.

Both the UK and the EU informed that they intend to add the provision of recurring advice on catch opportunities for the two species in these areas to their respective advice agreements with ICES.

e) Skates and rays

The Parties committed to undertake assessment of the two approaches separately. Arising from this, the Parties will come together for technical discussions in October 2022, with a view to agreeing a way forward for the EU-UK annual consultations for 2023.

f) Mixed fisheries science

The Parties committed to progress the draft terms of reference with a view to being finalised by the fifth SCF meeting in October.

Item 8: Multi-year strategies for shared non-quota stocks

The Parties noted the work to date on the development of multi-year strategies for shared non-quota stocks (NQS). The Parties agreed to work towards the finalisation of an agreed overarching framework for the development of individual multi-year strategies for shared NQS by the fifth SCF meeting in October. Following this, the Parties will commence work on a pilot multi-year strategy for king scallops.

Item 9: Non-quota stocks catch data

The Parties noted the work to date on NQS data exchanges and agreed to continue working together to monitor and ensure their robustness.

Item 10: Preparation of the 2023 EU-UK annual consultations

The Parties noted the successful conclusion of in-year consultations for sandeel and English Channel sprat earlier this year, and took note of the upcoming in-year consultation on Norway pout to start in early October. The Parties also noted the upcoming Annual Consultations for 2023 (and for 2024 for certain deep-sea stocks) to take place in the final quarter of the year.

In view of the preparation of these annual consultations, the Parties noted the planning meeting foreseen for September in the schedule for the consultations agreed in January 2022 in accordance with Article 498(1) of the TCA.

The Parties affirmed their commitment to seek to reach agreement by 10 December, in line with Article 498(2) of the TCA.

Item 11: Next steps

The Parties agreed to organise a meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries in Brussels in September ahead of the fifth SCF meeting in London in October. This will be the last SCF meeting for this year due to the annual consultations for 2023 taking place in the final quarter of the year.

Item 12: Any Other Business (AOB)

Item 13: Closure

Annex 1: List of participants in the fourth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries

EU delegation (29)

- EU Co-Chair of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries
- EU Co-Chair of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries' Working Group on Fisheries
- European Commission Officials
- European External Action Service Official
- Delegation of the European Union to the UK Official
- Representatives of EU Member States

UK delegation (51)

- UK Co-Chair of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries
- UK Co-Chair of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries' Working Group on Fisheries
- UK Government Officials from DEFRA and Cabinet Office
- UK Government DEFRA Legal Advisors
- Scottish Government Officials
- Northern Ireland Executive Officials
- Welsh Government Officials
- Isle of Man Government Officials
- Government of Jersey Officials
- States of Guernsey Officials
- Marine Management Organisation Officials
- UK Mission to the European Union Officials